RAJYA SABHA

Monday, the 14*th December,* 2009/23*rd Agrahayana* 1931 *(Saka)*

The House met at eleven of the clock,
MR. CHAIRMAN in the Chair.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question No. 341. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: A very serious thing has happened. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: This is Question Hour. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: They are trying to de-reserve the SC/ST posts. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please, sit down. ...*(Interruptions)*... There are other occasions to raise the issue. ..*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: It is a serious situation for SCs/STs. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI D. RAJA: Give us chance to raise the matter. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: There are other occasions to raise the issue. ...*(Interruptions)*... This is not the time to raise ...*(Interruptions)*... Please, resume your places...*(Interruptions)*... Question No. 341, Dr. K. Malaisamy. ...*(Interruptions)*...

Measures to face climate change

*341. DR. K. MALAISAMY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the extent of threat to prosperity and development from climate change and the concrete measures undertaken to face this challenge and the consequential effect of such initiatives;

(b) whether climate change has occurred all of a sudden or it is the off-shoot of developments over a period of time; and

(c) if it was expected much earlier, why due precautions and preventive steps have not been taken well in advance?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) to (c) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) to (c) India has been facing vagaries of climate since many years including extreme weather events such as floods and droughts. Accordingly, there is a thin line of distinction between climate variability and

climate change. Climate Change is a long-term phenomenon and has been duly recognized by the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), Fourth Assessment Report released in 2007. The international community including India is actively involved to find ways and means of preventing climate change which dates back to adopting the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in 1992 and its Kyoto Protocol in 1997. The Government is aware of the adverse impacts of climate change viz. increased frequency of extreme weather events, variation in pattern of monsoons, rise in surface temperature, sea level rise and melting of glaciers. Climate Change is also likely to affect agriculture and food production as well as increase of the incidence of vector borne diseases.

Being aware of the likely implications of climate change the Government has released National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) on 30th June 2008. The National Action Plan outlines eight Missions in specific areas of solar energy, enhanced energy efficiency, sustainable habitat, water, sustaining Himalayan Ecosystems, Green India, sustainable agriculture and strategic knowledge for climate change. These National Missions are being institutionalized by respective Ministries for implementation.

Besides, Government has taken several steps by towards sustainable development through a range of policies and programmes to mitigate climate change aimed at energy conservation, improved energy efficiency in various sectors; promoting use of renewable energy; power sector reforms; use of cleaner and lesser carbon intensive fuel for transport; fuel switching to cleaner energy; afforestation and conservation of forests; promotion of clean coal technologies and encouraging Mass Rapid Transport systems.

India has also developed programmes relating to adaptation to climate variability, in the areas of agriculture, water resources, health and sanitation, forests and coastal zone infrastructure.

DR. K. MALAISAMY: Mr. Chairman, Sir, this is in conformity to the views of the hon. Chairman that Members should come to the question straightway. I am inclined to agree with the hon. Chairman and I am coming to my first supplementary without going to any prologue or introduction. Sir, the hon. Minister in his reply has given various causes leading to climate change. I have gone through it. It is a major macro level problem of very high magnitude. Sir, the scientists of the UNFCCC and the IPCC have already said that the Himalayan Glaciers will disappear in 2035, the holy Ganga will be reduced to a monsoon drain and half a million people in the Gangetic plain will face severe water scarcity. These are some of the points in addition to what has been listed in the answer. The causes that are arrived at by the Government are not upto the mark and inadequate and, on the other hand, the problem has not been understood in the right spirit. It has to be gone in depth. In other words, whatever the causes and whatever the measures you are trying to highlight, they are totally inadequate and totally ineffective. That is my first supplementary.

SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA: Sir, as I have stated in the reply, the Government is aware of the implications of the climate change and several steps have been taken by the Government. I would like to share with the hon. Members that the climate change is being handled at the highest level by the Prime Minister's Council on Climate Change. The Prime Minister is heading that Committee. Another Expert Committee on the Impacts of Climate Change is also in place. We have set up eight missions under the National Action Plan released by the Government of India in 2008. I am not in agreement with the hon. Member that the Government of India is not taking steps. Several steps have been taken in the past. Several new initiatives taken under the forestry are launch of CAMPA, Capacity Building in Forestry Scheme, Intensification of Forest Management Scheme, Accelerated Programme for Restoration and Regeneration of Forest. Under the energy sector, we have energy efficiency standards for appliances, energy conservation in building code, fuel efficiency norms, CDM Programme. On the research agenda, there is impact assessment of climate change, Himalayan Glacier Monitoring Programme. There is a separate mission on this. Then we have pathways of India's carbon emissions, etc. So, we are taking, host of actions.

DR. K. MALAISAMY: Sir, coming to the next aspect of the problem, a Conference was held in Copenhagen consisting of 192 countries, and there is no consensus among the countries. There is a difference of opinion - rich countries on one side, and other countries on the other. An open fight between two sectors has come to light. The rich countries are known as the enemies of the earth. This is the perception of many of the scientists. Our hon. Minister has given an open statement that the Government of India is not going along with other countries; it will have its own way. This is a macro level, world level problem.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Don't go on furnishing explanations; please put your supplementary question.

DR. K. MALAISAMY: To deal with such a big problem, we need unanimity. The problem is not exclusive to India. In such a situation India has taken its own stand. Can the problem be solved at all in this way? In his reply, hon. Minister has stated that they have taken enough measures, increase of forest cover, etc. What I am trying to point out is that steps taken by India are only fringe of the problem.

MR. CHAIRMAN: This is a statement. Fine, you are entitled to give your view. But, that is not a question. I would request the hon. Member to put the question.

DR. K. MALAISAMY: India has taken a stand that it will have its own stand. If the Government takes a stand individually, is it capable of handling the whole sole problem connecting to other countries.

SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA: Sir, I would like to inform the hon. Member that the negotiations are going on, and I would like to restrain myself from going into the details of what is going to happen. Therefore, we have to wait till the outcome of the negotiations comes. The

Negotiators are there. Our hon. Minister for Environment and Forests has gone there. Our hon. Prime Minister will also be going there to attend that Conference and give a political statement. But, I can assure the hon. Member and the House that the country's interest will be protected.

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: I would like to know from the hon. Minister straightway whether it is a fact that the World Bank has made a study that 20-25 per cent cut in emission intensity by 2020, as proposed by the Planning Commission and the Government, will require massive capital and other expenditure and shall impact the economy. Do the Government and the Planning Commission agree with such conclusions? If 'yes', please give the details of expenditure required in the next two Plans and how do we meet the stated target?

SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA: Sir, several estimates are coming forward. We have taken several measures and steps. We have already taken domestic actions, and our emission intensity has decreased by 17.6 per cent during the last 15 years. We are doing our local actions. Whatever may be the expenditure, that is the job of the Planning Commission and various Ministries. Eight missions are there, and we will handle it domestically.

SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR: Sir, I have one specific question. As this is a very important topic, we have debated it in detail. The hon. Minister has categorically committed, promised, and assured the House that we will not accept peak year formulation; we will not accept legally binding emission cuts; we will not deviate from per capita position; we will not accept any verification of unsupported action; and, lastly, he has said that the developed world must adhere to the Kyoto Protocol and the base year will be 1990 and not 2005. Sir, there are reports from Copenhagen that pressure is being built on India. So, I want to ask this question specifically. While making negotiations, if the Government makes sudden change from any of these positions, which are declared in the House, will it come to the House, because Parliament is in session, before committing in Copenhagen?

SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA: Sir, as I have said earlier, the conference is going on, and as per newspapers, today will start the Ministerial segment. As the hon. Member has already stated, on the basis of statement made by our hon. Minister, we can have a 20-25 per cent reduction in emission intensity from 2005-2020. This will be a voluntary domestic commitment and will not form part of any international agreement committing India to binding emission intensity target and emission reduction outcomes. He has also stated that there will be two non-negotiable things. What are those? India will not accept legally binding emission reduction cut. Secondly, we will not accept under any circumstances an agreement which stipulates a peaking year for India.

This was the statement made by our hon. Minister in the other House of Parliament while replying in a Short Duration Discussion.

SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR: Sir, my question is, if you make any change in the negotiation, will you come before the House before committing it?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Don't ask hypothetical questions.

SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA: Sir, I will respond to his answer. The Minister has gone there. The conference is up to 18th and it may even go up to 19th I cannot say about that. When the hon. Minister comes he will apprise the House if the Parliament is in session.

SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA: Sir, it was global climatic change that was responsible for the birth of life forms on the earth. Now it was again climate change that was emerging as a threat to life, because this time changes were taking place at a faster rate than life forms could adapt to. According to the World Science Forum, under the banner of the United Nations, due to climate change and global warming, floods and droughts are going to be increased. So I want to know this from the hon. Minister categorically. What are the short-term and long-term measures taken by the Government of India in this regard? Because it will affect not just the human beings, but it will affect the agricultural land; it will affect water resources; and it will affect forests. I want to know this from the hon. Minister. What short-term and long-term measures have been taken by the Government of India to tackle this problem? Also, what steps the Government has taken to save the people of the North-Eastern region from this?

SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA: Sir, I agree with the hon. Member that some effects will be there on various aspects. He himself has stated that in his question. We have taken several measures by way of mitigation and adaptation. He is asking about adaptation measures. We have taken some measures by way of adaptation, such as, crop improvement, drought-proofing, surveillance and control over vector-borne diseases like Malaria and Dengue, risk financing programme, disaster management, joint forest management and water resources. Agriculture will be impacted. In the first communication to UNFCCC, India has communicated certain impacts saying that these are going to be impacted. IPCC deals with only what are going to be impacted on continental and regional basis. Our initial communication is specific. In the second communication which is being prepared these days and which will be submitted to the UNFCCC by 2011 as our obligation to the Convention, more details will be available. Sir, we are taking all steps by way of adaptation which are necessary in the interest of the country, whether it is forest, glaciers, eco-system, impact on human and environment, coastal areas, etc. All these things will be taken into account. As I have said earlier, one Committee is constituted to see the impact and suggest the remedial measures which are to be taken. We have set up these eight missions which will go in their respective areas and try to take all the measures that are needed.

Appointment of TV news correspondents in Doordarshan

*342. SHRI RAJNITI PRASAD: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state: